

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 198081

FOL REPEAT THE HAGUE 4161 SENT ACTION SECSTATE

INFO BERN BONN PARIS PRETORIA VIENNA AUG 19

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C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 4161

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TGEN, ENRG, NL

SUBJECT: PROPOSED US-DUTCH-SWISS SALE OF NUCLEAR REACTORS TO
SOUTH AFRICA

REF: HAGUE 4120

1. RHIJN-SCHELDE-VEROLME OFFICIAL (STIKKER) WHO HAD BEEN FULLY BRIEFED BY GE, CALLED ON US AUGUST 18 TO EXPRESS HIS CONCERN THAT CABINET HAD NOT DECIDED LAST FRIDAY TO SUPPORT SALE OF NUCLEAR REACTORS TO SOUTH AFRICA. HE UNDERSTOOD THAT ECONOMICS MINISTER LUBBERS HAD NOT RAISED SUBJECT BECAUSE HE HAD NOT HEARD FROM WASHINGTON WHAT US POSITION WAS.

2. WE INFORMED STIKKER OF OUR CONVERSATION AUGUST 15 WITH VAN VLIET OF FOREIGN MINISTRY. STIKKER SAID HE WOULD CALL HIS CONTACT AT ECONOMICS MINISTRY TO MAKE SURE MESSAGE HAD BEEN PASSED BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS.

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3. WHEN WE TOLD VAN VLIET OF STIKKER'S INQUIRY, HE SAID HE HAD INCORPORATED EMBASSY MESSAGE BASED ON STATE 193297 IN A PAPER, WHICH WAS DELIVERED TO CABINET ON AUGUST 15 WHILE IT WAS IN SESSION, HE GENTLY CHIDED RHIJN-SCHELDE FOR IMPATIENCE.

4. VAN VLIET SAID CABINET HAD PUT OFF CONSIDERATION OF CREDITS FOR SALE OF REACTOR VESSELS UNTIL AUGUST 22. HE SAID THERE IS NO GUARANTEE CABINET WILL MAKE DECISION THEN. SPEAKING PERSONALLY, VAN VLIET SAID CABINET PROBABLY POSTPONED DISCUSSING MATTER IN ORDER TO HAVE MORE TIME TO CONSIDER POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF CONGRESSIONAL ROLE IN APPROVING EXIM LOAN GREATER THAN \$60 MILLION. VAN VLIET THOUGHT FACT OF INVOLVEMENT BY CONGRESS WOULD CERTAINLY GIVE PAUSE TO DUTCH CABINET MINISTERS.

5. COMMENT: FOR POLITICIANS HERE, GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR SALE OF REACTOR VESSELS TO SOUTH AFRICA IS SENSITIVE ENOUGH ISSUE THAT THEY WOULD WANT TO WEIGH CAREFULLY HOW TO BROACH MATTER TO PARLIAMENT AND TO PUBLIC.

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